

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
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P 222029Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8142

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

USMISSION SINAI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT POUCH

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 MOSCOW 02636

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SY, PEPR, UR

SUBJECT: ASAD VISIT TO MOSCOW

SUMMARY. REPORT OF FIRST SOVIET-SYRIAN MEETING AND TEXT  
OF BREZHNEV-ASAD SPEECHES INDICATE SYRIAN RELUCTANCE  
TO EMBRACE TOTALLY MOSCOW'S HARD-LINE APPROACH TOWARD  
SADAT AND HIS POLICIES. IN EMBASSY'S VIEW ASAD ALSO  
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IMPLIES A DIFFERENCE OF OPINION OVER EVENTS IN HORN.  
END SUMMARY.

1. FEBRUARY 22 PRAVDA CARRIES TASS REPORT OF FIRST  
SESSION OF SOVIET-SYRIAN TALKS AS WELL AS TEXT OF  
BREZHNEV AND ASAD FEBRUARY 21 DINNER SPEECHES. TALKS,  
ATTENDED BY BREZHNEV, KOSYGIN, AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE

MARSHAL USTINOV (BUT NOT GROMYKO WHO, WE ARE TOLD, IS STILL "RESTING" OUTSIDE OF MOSCOW), TOOK PLACE IN ATMOSPHERE OF "FRIENDSHIP AND MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING." REPORT EMPHASIZED "EXCHANGE OF OPINION" WHICH TOOK PLACE ON BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL ISSUES. SPECIAL ATTENTION WAS DEVOTED TO M.E. SITUATION WHICH HAS BECOME "SERIOUSLY-COMPLICATED" AS RESULT OF ACTION BY IMPERIALIST FORCES AND LOCAL REACTION. REPORT CONDEMNED EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI SEPARATE DEALS AS CAUSING SERIOUS INJURY TO INTERESTS OF ARAB PEOPLE.

2. IN HIS SHORT TOAST TO ASAD, BREZHNEV:

--REPEATED SOVIET M.E. POSITION ON WITHDRAWAL, PALESTINIAN RIGHTS, AND INSURING SECURITY OF STATES OF REGION;  
--MENTIONED GENEVA IN PASSING BY ASKING RHETORICAL QUESTION ON NEED TO STOP "UNPRINCIPLED POLITICAL MANEUVERS IN M.E. WHICH ARE DANGEROUS FOR INTERESTS OF ARABS AND TO RETURN MATTER OF SETTLEMENT TO CHANNEL OF GENEVA CONFERENCE";  
--CONDEMNED "EGYPTIAN LEADERSHIP" FOR POLICIES WHICH HAD DEALT "SERIOUS INJURY" TO ARAB STRUGGLE AND HAD CAUSED M.E. PEACE SETTLEMENT TO BE "THRUST BACKWARD";  
--PRAISED TRIPOLI AND ALGIERS MEETINGS FOR LAYING FOUNDATION FOR STRENGTHENING FRONT OF OPPOSITION TO POLICY OF "CAPITULATION AND SELL OUT OF ARAB INTERESTS" (I.E., ANTI-EGYPTIAN FRONT).  
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3. IN RESPONSE, ASAD:

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--PRAISED SOVIET SUPPORT FOR ARABS AND PALESTINIANS WHICH WAS OF IMPORTANT SIGNIFICANCE IN CAUSE OF STRENGTHENING ARAB FRONT OF "STRUGGLE AGAINST AGGRESSION AND EXPANSION" (I.E., ANTI-ISRAELI FRONT);  
--NOTED THAT A JUST PEACE COULD NOT EXIST WITHOUT ACTIVE PARTICIPATION OF SOVIET UNION;  
--SPECIFICALLY CONDEMNED "RECENT VISIT TO ISRAEL" AND RESULTANT ACTS FOR SERIOUSLY AGGRAVATING M.E. SITUATION;  
--CRITICIZED IN GENERAL TERMS PLANS OF "FORCES HOSTILE TO ARAB NATION" AND DESCRIBED, ALSO IN GENERAL TERMS, SYRIAN PLANS TO RESIST "ALL MANIFESTATIONS OF CAPITULATION";

--EXPRESSED "SERIOUS CONCERN" OVER EVENTS IN AFRICA - A CONTINENT WHICH INCLUDES A "SIGNIFICANT PART OF THE ARAB WORLD AND WHICH IS CONNECTED TO IT BY COMMON INTERESTS."

4. COMMENT: EMBASSY INTERPRETS AFRICAN PASSAGE IN ASAD'S SPEECH AS REFERENCE TO SYRIA'S TIES OF RELIGION AND

CULTURE WITH THE SOMALIS AND THE ERITREANS AND THUS AS AN OBLIQUE STATEMENT OF DIFFERENCE WITH THE SOVIET UNION OVER EVENTS IN HORN. OUR INTERPRETATION IS GIVEN ADDITIONAL WEIGHT BY THE FACT THAT TASS ENGLISH WIRE EDITED THIS PASSAGE IN ASAD'S SPEECH TO REMOVE THE QUOTED PORTION.

5. EMBASSY DOES NOT WISH TO READ TOO MUCH BETWEEN THE LINES OF THIS FIRST PUBLIC STATEMENT ON ASAD VISIT. STILL, IT IS EVIDENT THAT DIFFERENCES OF INTERPRETATION OF ISSUES AND OF POLICIES EXIST BETWEEN SOVIETS AND SYRIANS AND THAT ASAD IS SHOWING DELIBERATE RESTRAINT IN THE FACE OF THE SOVIET ATTEMPTS TO (A) OBTAIN A MORE SPECIFIC CONDEMNATION OF SADAT AND (B) ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT

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SS-15 USIA-06 ACDA-12 /106 W  
-----120304 222113Z /66

P 222029Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8143

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY AMMAN

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 MOSCOW 02636

OF AN ANTI-SADAT, ANTI-U.S. FRONT IN WHICH THE SOVIET UNION  
WOULD PARTICIPATE. MATLOCK

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## Message Attributes

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INDICATE SYRIAN RELUCTAN  
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Sheryl P. Walter  
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